1:Murphy and Quain E-4,5 (1938) 1955
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The rapid exhaustion of the soil forces them into a life which, although not nomadic, involves frequent moves. As the soil in old plots is exhausted, new ones have to be opened up. The area of exploitable land around the village is limited by the need to transport the produce and protect the villagers from their enemies. Thus, after the land available to the village has been used, the group moves.

The main subsistence of the nine village groups now living in the upper Xingú area is derived from this typically Amazonian shifting horticulture coupled with fishing in the extensive streams, lagoons, and estuaries. Apparently, the population of the region was never great enough to cause any pressure on land or other resources. Each village maintained exclusive rights of exploitation over certain waterways and areas of land within which the village always moved. There evidently were not, and still are not, any clearly defined territorial boundaries; but village rights are implicitly recognized.

The Neighbors of the Trumai

Although there is considerable uniformity in the cultures of the upper Xingú tribes, their linguistic affiliations are diverse. The main language stocks of aboriginal Brazil are represented. On the Kuluene River are the linguistically independent Trumaí and the Cariban Kuikuru, Kalapalo, Tsuva, and Naravute. Near the waters of the Kuliseu River live the Tupian Kamayurá and Auetí, the Arawakan Mehinaku and Yaulapití, and the Cariban Nahukwa. The Batoví River is inhabited by the Arawakan Waurá and Kustenaú.[1] All these villages maintain a rather distrustful peace among themselves, but live in fear of their hostile Gê- and Tupian-speaking neighbors on the perimeters of the upper Xingú drainage area.

The upper Xingú "tribes" consist of one village each. It seems evident from the linguistic heterogeneity of the region that it is a *cul de sac* — one of the aboriginal refuge areas which characterize the cultural landscape of the headwaters of the Amazon and its tributaries.

The cultural uniformity of the above peoples has impressed all observers, as has the extensive contact that they maintain with each other. Descriptions of this homogeneity are to be found in von den Steinen[2] and, latterly, in Galvão[3] and Oberg.[4] Among the principal material traits which distinguish the area as opposed to neighboring, but outside, groups are: haystack-shaped houses arranged in a circle around a central plaza; bark canoes; dependence upon fish for protein;

[1] Oberg (1953, p. 4) states that the Yaulapití, Kustenaú, Tsuva, and Naravute no longer live in independent villages, but reside among other groups, usually of the same linguistic family.

[2] Von den Steinen 1886. [3] Galvão 1949. [4] Oberg 1953.

1:Murphy and Quain E-4,5 (1938) 1955
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Agendas were ordinarily based on the immediate needs of the household or the desire for some variety in their diet. Food, however, was shared widely, and this probably robbed most work of any sense of urgency. Apparently, each man's plans for the day were determined in part by the season, in part by the household needs, and in part by what he felt like doing.

Some men stayed in the village all day, sleeping and working intermittently at small tasks. The women spent more time in the village than the men. Their work was done in the house or, if outside, in the shade of the house. Since male work was done largely in the morning, most of the men had ample time in the afternoon for trade, wrestling, and other diversions. The trade game was an especially popular indoor activity on rainy days.

Much less work was probably done during the rainy season, for planting would be finished, the *piqui* would be harvested, and the heavy rains would confine people to the village. However, there was much less seasonal variation for the women, as they had to continue to make *beijú*, weave, cook, and care for their households — the ordinary female chores, whatever the month.

Trumaí economic life was loosely organized. Few types of labor transcended the nuclear family, which was the basic unit of economic cooperation and interdependence. The inventory of material culture was sparse, and workmanship was not highly developed. What the Trumaí did not make, they could obtain by trade. From the standpoint of technology, the Trumaí were more backward than other tribes in the upper Xingú area, perhaps a reflection of their more recent settlement in the region.

1:Murphy and Quain E-4,5 (1938) 1955
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CHAPTER THREE

Trumaí Social Organization

Property Ownership

Trumaí society was relatively simple. There was no social stratification based on wealth, nor were the mechanisms of social control and cohesion highly developed. This was in accord with the individualization of productive effort and the low level of economic surplus. The political unit was a single community, the sole bearer of Trumaí culture.

All land and productive resources were considered the property of the community, and the right to their exploitation resided with any individual willing to expend the labor. Gardens were individual property, but only in the sense that the man who reclaimed the land from the jungle was entitled to its product. There was no concept of alienable property in land, entailing the right of disposition. The *piquí* trees were said to be owned individually, but the owner exercised exclusive rights only over the first fruits. Other wild food plants were community property and their fruits belonged to the gatherer.

The fishing rights to lagoons and backwaters of the rivers belonged to the tribes in whose territory they were located. There was no individual ownership of fishing sites.

There was property in foods, but as soon as they were cooked they were freely distributed. *Beijú* belonged to the women, but the manioc out of which it was prepared was said to be the property of the man who grew it. Such distinctions were largely academic. Actually, the men grew the vegetable and the women harvested it, prepared it, and cooked it, after which it was distributed and eaten. The same situation prevailed in regard to the products of fishing, hunting, and gathering. Salt was the only exception, as it was prepared and owned by individual men and women. The difference undoubtedly lies in the fact that salt was an important trade item, while the other commodities were not.

Very little property can be said to have belonged to the family. Baskets and gourd containers were made by the men for themselves and for the women, but they were often used by both a man and his wife. Nearly all material objects outside of natural resources were owned by the person who made them or the person to whom an object was given. House ownership was vague, since houses were built and occupied by more than one man, and abandoned when the village moved. The house, however, was often considered the property of the man who put

1:Murphy and Quain E-4,5 (1938) 1955
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Divorce and Adultery

595 The polygynous unions were extremely brittle. In two cases observed
586 by Quain, they lasted only a few days. In both instances the first wife
was responsible for the break-up. The bonds of the second marriage of a
[837] plural mating were loose, for Jakwanari's second wife had sexual relations with several Trumaí men with apparent impunity. Such behavior would have been dealt with severely by a husband had his first wife
586 been involved. Divorces also occurred in monogamous marriages; they entailed little more than telling the wife to leave. After the birth of their son, Oirupa sent his Mehinaku wife back to her village and kept the child. The right of the father's village over the children seems to have been general in the area, for Autu had a son by a Waurá husband, whom the Waurá refused to give to the Trumaí.

684 There is no recorded instance of adultery precipitating a divorce,
[586] although this probably occurred. However, the usual procedure was for the injured husband to beat his wife and make a lengthy and heated speech against the offending suitor. The wife of an adulterous husband
[578] showed anger toward his paramour and did not speak to her. Hair pulling resulted in some cases. The husband's behavior was viewed as reprehensible by the wife, but she took no action against him. One wife even chuckled a bit over her husband's adventures, although jealousy is the more usual response.

837 Due to the threat of punishment, the married women engaged far less in extra-marital relations than did their husbands. Both married and unmarried men sought out unattached women, but instances of married men in such liaisons were less numerous. The younger married men and Maibu, the chief, seemed to have been the chief offenders. The latter
[582] complained to Quain that all the women in the village were prohibited to him, as they were his wife's cross-cousins. Neither his genealogy nor his activities bore him out, and he often approached the single women and Jakwanari's second wife when the other men were out of the village. Everyone conceded that, although Maibu's wife had not reached menopause, she was "too old." Thus they rationalized his escapades.

105 The instability of the nuclear family and the vicissitudes to which it
571 was exposed were alleviated by household and kin distribution and by
594 the interdependence of co-resident relatives of the opposite sex for
591 sexually specialized goods and services. These arrangements made possible the economic workability of Trumaí culture. The conjugal family was basic to the culture, however, and marriage was highly
836 desirable to the Trumaí. Despite the shortage of available women and
[578] the conflicts which stemmed from it, sex relations between unmarried persons were free and easy and subject to little or no public censure,
000 except insofar as they encroached on the interests of others. Incest

1:Murphy and Quain E-4,5 (1938) 1955
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CHAPTER FOUR

Religious Beliefs and Practices

182 771 829 The lapse of many religious practices and the lessening of interest in those aspects of culture that we classify as religion were striking features of this dying society. Older informants rememered the time when there were ceremonial masks, the flute house, and other traits that are still found among certain tribes of the upper Xingú. Indeed, if it were not for Matiwana's unusual age, the Trumaí would be even more lacking in ceremonial knowledge. Yet there seems to have been little regret on the part of either the older or younger generations for this culture loss. They shrugged it off, saying that their grandfathers had had such [177] practices, but that they did not. This indifference is not too surprising, since much of their religion was borrowed from their upper Xingú neighbors not too long ago.[1]

771 105 Despite the decline in interest in the ceremonial cycle and the disappearance of certain religious traits, the main outlines of Trumaí religion were still observable in Quain's time. Shamanism was still practiced extensively, but it was simple both in form and supporting ideology. Ceremonialism was related to subsistence and curing. The shaman's individualized power resulted in a specialization of religious functions as did the individual ownership of ceremonial songs and dances. Some Trumaí, like old Matiwana, were better versed in the [193] religious rites than others, but they did not constitute a priestly class. While no one person interceded with the supernatural on behalf of the [182] whole village, the group ceremonials provided a focal point for social participation and village cooperation, and many of them were undertaken by the community for the benefit of all.

Shamanism

756 [184] The shamanistic art of curing was known and employed by nearly all the adult males of the village, and in this sense parallels the practices recorded among the Kamayurá by Oberg.[2] There is, however, a type

[1] Kamayurá ceremonial and religious life, much of which was once shared by the Trumaí, is discussed by Oberg (1953) and Galvão (1949, 1950). The extent of Trumaí culture loss can be roughly inferred from these sources and from the work of the earlier ethnologists.

[2] Oberg 1953, p. 60.

1:Murphy and Quain E-4,5 (1938) 1955
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CHAPTER SIX

The Death of a Culture

Today there are but twenty-five remaining Trumaí. The fact that they disbanded once during the recent past shows that this small number approaches a critical point at which such a culture is no longer socially viable. If the present population trend continues, Trumaí society will definitely end, and, with the complete assimilation of the descendants of the Trumaí into other tribes, Trumaí culture, except for those elements of it that have been adopted by their neighbors, will belong to the past.

Primitive cultures and the populations that transmitted them are disappearing in many parts of the world today. In most instances, however, they are being destroyed by extended face-to-face contacts with Western society. This is not precisely the case with the Trumaí. Here, there was no large scale transmission of Western culture and no direct interaction with Brazilian society. But slight though the contact of the upper Xingú Indians with the whites was, it resulted in the introduction of respiratory infections that contributed greatly to their depopulation. In this sense, the white man is responsible for the impending death of the Trumaí.

Although the Trumaí were still carrying on their village life during Quain's residence and were to continue to do so, certain changes were taking place in their culture which were symptomatic of the fundamental instability induced by their low numbers.

It is immediately apparent that their weakness made the Trumaí vulnerable to other tribes, both the nominally friendly ones of the upper Xingú Basin, and the hostile ones of the surrounding country. In 1938 the Trumaí could not have successfully withstood a strong Suyá or Yuruna raid, nor could they have launched an attack upon the Suyá for women, as did the more vigorous Kamayurá. Indeed, the Trumaí had good reason to fear the least sound in the jungle at night.

Also, the Trumaí were held in low esteem by their immediate neighbors at the time of Quain's study. This was a severe blow to their *elan*, and it undoubtedly affected their self-image. It led, too, to more concrete results. As noted above, other tribes took Trumaí women during their most fertile years, and it is almost certain that the few "outside" women, who were brought into the Trumaí village through marriage, failed to restore the balance. Moreover, there were no "outside" men

1:Murphy and Quain E-4,5 (1938) 1955
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in the Trumaí community, for, as Oberg notes, no adult male would choose to live with a people of such low status.[1]

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It might be expected that the Trumaí could have compensated for this drain by raising their birth rate. However, in this population of 43 persons, there were only ten children, an extremely small number when the low average life span is considered. Furthermore, only two of the children were females. Of the approximately twelve women who

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were capable of bearing children, only one was pregnant, and the others were urging her to abort her child. Thus, infanticide and abortion were taking a heavy toll in the Trumaí village.

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The custom of killing twins and of spacing births three or four years apart are reported by Oberg for the Kamayurá,[2] and these factors may well have been present in the Trumaí situation. The long post-natal taboo on sexual intercourse had the same effect. Wagley, who studied the dying but equally unacculturated Tapirapé, found that traditional practices were contributing to the complete depopulation of that group also.[3]

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But among the Trumaí there is still another and less tangible dimension. Abortion may have been urged on a pregnant woman because she had no husband, but how is one to explain the killing of two of Aloari's children without his consent, or the fact that there were eight male and only two female children in the community? The limited information available suggests that the Trumaí were purposely restricting their number and committing suicide, perhaps unintentionally, in the process. Two reasons for this extreme behavior may be hypothesized: first, the impasse in which the Trumaí found themselves because of the steady depopulation made them so personally insecure and apathetic regarding both the present and the future that they were no longer willing to rear sizable families, despite their evident devotion to children; and second, they may not have thought it possible to produce the surplus necessary to support such families. Actually, however, even with their diminished numbers the Trumaí could have increased their food supply.

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Their lowered standard of living was due to more than attitudes. Loss of population no doubt also decreased the yield of Trumaí fishing and therefore limited their chief source of protein. To be sure, bow and arrow fishing was little affected, but fish poisoning, the only communal subsistence technique practiced by them, was much less effective when employed by a small group, for a few people can adequately poison only smaller watercourses and branches of lagoons, while a greater number can cover larger streams and whole lagoons. In the latter circumstance, both the take would be larger and larger species would be available. Moreover, when the waters are heavily poisoned and enough people are present to reap the "harvest," there is less chance of fish escaping. Thus, up to

[1] Oberg 1953, p. 15. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 62. [3] Wagley 1940.

1:Murphy and Quain E-4,5 (1938) 1955
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a certain point at least, the take increases geometrically with the number of persons participating.

In gardening, also, which was not practiced collectively, their small number decreased Trumaí security. It was common for nearly all the village men to plant their gardens in clearings adjacent to those of their neighbors. Obviously, if one part of such a single, extended clearing was improperly fired, or if the crops were destroyed by armadillos or wild pigs, the whole village might be without food. Crop failure for a variety of causes is common in the tropical forests, but most aboriginal communities in South America have several separated garden clearings, each owned by an individual or extended family. If one garden fails, the family can, in a period of emergency, reap from others. Oberg relates that the Trumaí once had to turn for food to the Kamayura,[4] perhaps because of the failure of the village clearing.

It is, of course, possible that in the past the Trumaí organized their gardens along the more rational lines of the Kamayurá;[5] and it is also possible that they never made a proper ecological adaptation subsequent to their arrival in the upper Xingú region. But lacking information on their economy prior to their decimation, we cannot make any firm statement on these points. However, it is certain that, despite their small numbers, the individual Trumaí could have cleared and planted much more land. The average size of the gardens observed by Quain was one-half acre, and this area had to feed up to four people. Many men also had old gardens which were planted only to manioc. According to Quain's calculations, the total acreage of Trumaí gardens was only a little over thirteen. Since yields from forest soils are not high, it is evident that this very small area must have barely met the needs of a population of 43 persons. Manifestly, the Trumaí did not work hard enough; and it seems evident that their lack of application did more to impoverish them than any other single factor.

If the other upper Xingú tribes are used as criteria to establish what Trumaí society was like before its decline, some very serious dysfunctions within Trumaí social structure soon become apparent. To be sure, such a comparison is an arbitrary procedure; and it is only invoked here for its heuristic value. Since village and house patrilocality is the usual mode of residence among the Trumaí, a household similar to that of the Kamayurá, and with like functions, might be expected and might indeed have existed in the past. However, the Trumaí death rate in 1938 was so high that these units disintegrated before they had gone beyond the embryonic stage. House membership was shifting, the number of persons involved small, and leadership nebulous. And since kinship was the principal mechanism for structuring interpersonal relationships in Trumaí society, this lack of a stable, kin-structured unit probably did

[4] Oberg 1953, p. 42. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 45.

1:Murphy and Quain E-4,5 (1938) 1955
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105 174 571 602 serious damage to the individual personality. Also, many individuals could not enact whole sets of kin-determined roles because they had no relatives of the proper complementary status. For example, parents-in-law normally exerted considerable influence and control over younger married couples, but hardly anyone in the village had such relatives. Similarly, cross-cousin marriage was the preferred union, but cross-cousins were generally unavailable. Moreover, because of the shortage of women, marriage came to be more a cause of conflict than a consolidator of kinship bonds.

105 182 628 Not only was the family world of the Trumaí crumbling, but all lines of authority and social control were weak. The Trumaí seemed unable to unite for such culturally approved purposes as economic cooperation or hospitality. Trumaí leadership, like that of many primitive peoples, was predicated on the existence of strong bonds of kinship, economic interdependence, and a general agreement on goals and policies. These preconditions were no longer found among the Trumaí. In this structural vacuum, the Trumaí chief was less and less able to cope with the growing self-assertiveness of certain men, and was increasingly forced into a neutral role. As the community weakened, his position weakened.

105 182 578 A number of reasons account for the factionalism which developed within the Trumaí village. Some are a function of personality, others of the diminished population. Obviously women were at a premium and many men were compelled to do without mates. The resultant competition was, as we have seen, a festering sore in the body politic. Connected with it, but having further ramifications, the bonds of kinship and the expected behavior between kinsmen underwent attrition and upset what social balance could have been achieved under more normal conditions. Indeed fear of the outside world more than internal forces of cohesion held the Trumaí community together.

105 182 771 Other integrative mechanisms in Trumaí culture were also disappearing. Conspicuous among them was the gradual abandonment of many elements in the Trumaí ceremonial cycle. (Significantly this left the highly individual practice of shamanism as the most active religious expression in Trumaí culture). In part, this loss may have been due to the inability of the Trumaí to amass a sufficiently large food surplus for the feasting that was required when visitors from other tribes were present. Not enough is known about the ritual of the Trumaí to warrant any broad generalizations on the effects of depopulation on ceremonial participation, but their numbers may well have been approaching the minimum necessary to carry out the rites. Only a few men who had depended heavily on one old man for their instruction possessed the requisite ceremonial knowledge. When this old man died, Trumaí culture must have suffered a severe blow. Younger men were little interested in learning the ritual and lore. Moreover, the small number of bearers of

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Trumaí culture and the shortness of their average life span must have seriously interfered with the instruction of the young. In addition, the very eclecticism of Trumaí culture militated against conservatism and is indicative of the low value which they placed on their own culture. 105 182 171

In the chapter on religion, the disinterest of the people in their religious activities was often noted. Such behavior may appear paradoxical, but ethnographic literature provides many instances of the decline of traditional belief systems in the face of cultural crisis. In the case of the Trumaí, disinterest in the religious sphere was closely related to disinterest in other aspects of their culture. The Trumaí world view had become a philosophy of despair. While depopulation was causing social and cultural disintegration, cultural factors in their turn were furthering depopulation. The Trumaí were set in a steady downward spiral. [181]

In summary it can be said that, on the basis of Quain's notes, the Trumaí were an anxiety ridden people. They were extremely sensitive and their feelings were easily hurt. They demanded individual recognition and attention. They were disinclined to work in their own interest or to join with each other in community projects. Apathetic towards their own world, they were distrustful of the world outside. These observations find considerable confirmation in de Lima's comments on the Trumaí: 105 152 156 181

> The behavior of this tribe which lives today in a state of humiliation and withdrawal in the face of the other peoples, is quite different from that of the Tupians. They are extremely distrustful Indians; they do not have a frank and happy expression and no matter how long one lives with them they remain always shut off. They do not have the dynamism, nor the disposition to work of the Kamayurá.[6]

It seems certain that this personality structure was not a survival of their more prosperous pre-contact period, when the Trumaí enjoyed some renown as warriors, but was a product of the growing distress which emerged during the period when the their whole security system of the individual — kinship and community — was breaking down. Under the new circumstances the individual Trumaí was no longer lodged in the matrix of the extended family. No longer did the rules of kinship that had formerly guided interpersonal relations operate smoothly for him. No longer did a vigorous community intervene between him and the outside world. There was no strong family, community, or tradition with which he could identify himself. The weakening of the socio-cultural structure precipitated him into conflict with his fellows; and it caused him to transfer some of his dependence to other and stronger groups. And in this effort also, he was unsuccessful, for other tribes looked down upon him as a member of an irredeemably inferior group. 105 152 182

[6] De Lima 1949, p. 25.

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105 182 The dilemma of the individual, itself a function of the deterioration of the group, strengthened the centripetal forces within the society. Similarly, the apathy induced by the process of ego-destruction rendered the Trumaí economically incompetent, and reduced the village to a marginal level of subsistence. Under these conditions, his failure to procreate is understandable.

But no one factor explains the passing of the Trumaí. This was not the result of an acculturative process, since the Trumaí were not adapting to anything new. Their recent history, however, underlines a development in which depopulation, cultural disintegration and personality disorganization engendered further depopulation, cultural disintegration, and personality disorganization. That such a development is cataclysmic in a group as small as the Trumaí is shown by the marginality of the twenty-five survivors and the precarious position of their social identity only seventeen years after Quain left their midst.

1:Murphy and Quain E-4,5 (1938) 1955
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APPENDIX

Buell Quain, in a letter to the late Dr. Ruth Benedict written from Brazil on December 21, 1938, summarized several aspects of Trumaí culture which have a direct and immediate bearing on their decline. Following are excerpts of ethnological interest from this letter, which was discovered after this monograph was completed:

"They are a dying culture. Each generation improves its imitation of Kamayurá culture. Everyone in the village knows a few Kamayurá words. Almost all the songs in the manioc fertility ceremony are Kamayurá. Half the people in the village can carry on a conversation in Kamayurá with ease. One household (there are four) uses Kamayurá in preference to Trumaí. The mother of the house owner speaks no Trumaí; she is a Kamayurá woman who has lived with the Trumaí for about twenty-five years. The child of the household, a ten year old girl, confuses Kamayurá kinship terms with Trumaí in classifying the village. All Trumaí women between twenty and forty have been captive wives among the Kamayurá (which puts the Trumaí men in a peculiar position which they fully but fruitlessly resent) .... They have lots of disorganized leisure. They are sleepy (in part because of insects and fear throughout the night). They are ready to imitate not only the Kamayurá, but me, in petty daily habits. No outsider speaks Trumaí.

"There is nobody among them who volunteers information of ethnological value. For three months I dug for structure and got very little... Dullness cannot be attributed to the climate.

"The village is small .... Each of the four households — now five because of a recent split — are organized, or perhaps disorganized, according to different sociological principals. Three of the seventeen women are of foreign birth; one is Kamayurá, one is Mehinaku, and one is Suyá. The first two speak no Trumaí. A fourth woman with ringworm and two sick children is said to be Yaulapití, but she is well set in Trumaí culture. Nobody claims her as a relative (in part because of aversion toward her ringworm); hence she is used as a prostitute by every man in the village — she is the village joke. Among the men, I have found remarkably uniform responses to various 'tests'. (I said 'Draw a picture of a woman and a man.' Every man but one drew the woman first and oriented her in a distinctive way on the paper. The women showed no such regularity. One Kamayurá man tested also lacked this stereotyped response.)

1:Murphy and Quain E-4,5 (1938) 1955
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"Tremendous interest in property, together with a simple and declining culture, results in my being a seriously disturbing element in their lives. Casual conversation always degenerates into a squabble about gift-giving .... There is intense pleasure in possession. Children get no sympathy when they are hurt, but objects are usually given to them. Every child has the right at least 'to see' anything he desires. In this respect children are pampered. Adults whine for things; withholding a desired object makes them intensely unhappy. Aggressive possession is admired.. Trade games make the exchange of property very fluid. Yet values in trade are well defined, and there is no prestige in giving more than one gets. Within the kinship circle, however, the old lavish property on the young. A father's garden is spoken of as that of his five year old son. There is a deliberate attempt to instill aggressive ownership attitudes in the young. A three year old girl is taught to claim objects in a loud voice. This is done by shouting the possessive pronoun....

"These are a settled people who live within the strict limits of their village. Their small number has advantage in the study of individuals. They have no knowledge of the world beyond the Kuluene-Kuliseu. It has no more real existence than the various inhabited regions of the heavens. The half dozen expeditions which have passed down the river have communicated with the natives only with signs. The one important result of such contact was division from peripheral tribes and the rise of metal tools. The disappearance of the stone industry, on which a defunct Trumaí moiety had a monopoly, has occurred within the last generation.[1] The increased leisure which probably resulted is not utilized economically.

"The complete lack of self-consciousness among these people makes behavior observation remarkably easy. Before I knew any of the language, I could sit by the hour in various households and time the actions of people while they paid no attention to me. For instance, one man during twenty minutes of leisure lay down to rest in his hammock fifteen different times, but each time disturbed himself with the remembrance of some petty chore undone....

"The only restriction of behavior that I have seen in casual intra-village personal relations is that the children are told not to litter the floor. The only positive rule is that the head of a household must sit with a guest and converse while the guest is inside his house .... Furthermore, extra-marital sexual intercourse has occurred in a shadowy corner of my house.. This lack of self-consciousness contrasts strongly with the Karajá, who are more prudish than the Fijians....

"Shortage of women, because of theft of young women, polygamy, lack of sexual interest in old wives (of which there are several), and

[1] Quain refers here to the moiety-like division of the Trumaí which has been discussed in Chapter Three. This appears to be rather a result of the merger of the northern and southern Trumaí villages. The latter specialised in axe-making.

1:Murphy and Quain E-4,5 (1938) 1955
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post-natal sexual taboos is a serious social problem. A large group of not very pretty bachelors must use the woman with ringworm or the Suyá captive, whose present marriage is considered dishonorable. These women have no brothers or fathers. In contrast with Karajá, there is no stylized homosexuality. Yet the complete freedom of sexual play results in activities which might be considered overt homosexuality. But to the Trumaí such activity has little emotional content. It does not seem to set up special personal relationships.

"Women are in constant fear of attack. Yet a wife tyrannizes her husband by withholding her favors and pulling the hair of anyone whom she suspects her husband has used sexually. Between married people, sex occurs at night — preferably when everyone else is asleep — or while going to the forest on various gathering tasks. A man and his wife engage in many things together, such as afternoon relaxation, fishing, and gardening. There is companionship even between those spouses among whom the wife is much older and no longer of interest to the man sexually.

"Between themselves, the men are extremely individualistic. Cooperation rarely exceeds kin limits even at the explicit order of the chief. Only when outsiders are present do men band together in a mock display of solid cooperation.... There is only one old man, who is about seventy — all others are under 45 ..... All death is murder. Nobody expects to live longer than the next rainy season. Men always carry bows and arrows for protection. Shamans keep the village in constant fear of attack from the Suyá or Kamayurá.... There are imaginary attacks quite often. Men gather in terror at the center of the village — the most exposed spot — and wait to be shot at from the dark bushes at the margin of the village....

"Authority is lax. The patrilineally hereditary chief does no work and is a parasite on his household. He is self-conscious of the rank of his wife whose marriage has elevated her. He lounges in his hammock, but it is his duty to orate from the center of the village at night and sometimes in the morning, urging the men to undertake group projects. He is the only man who has the courage to be an executive. This contrasts with the Kamayurá where there are several chiefs who, uniquely in their culture, are shy and ashamed to speak and whose orders must be referred through special talkers. It also contrasts with the Karajá where the chief is the best worker .... When the season changes, the Trumaí chief urges the people to engage in the new work, which they would do anyway. An example of the complete independence of spirit is illustrated by the two brothers who would not help the brother-in-law of one build the house in which they all were living, because they thought the mosquitoes would be bad in that location during the rainy season. The brother-in-law built the tremendous house all by himself — the two brothers lived comfortably in it.

1:Murphy and Quain E-4,5 (1938) 1955
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105 626 578 [622] [123] [622]

"Angry stylized quarreling is a legal device. The village hoots in derision at him whose argument is poor. The chief must be a master at this kind of argument, but all men and even women participate .... Though everyone makes speeches, it is only the chief who makes executive speeches. Quarrels have always been about women, with the exception of the one which occurred upon my arrival in the village (one party disapproved of me...). The chief does not interfere in personal quarrels. The other men sit quietly in the center of the village smoking and trying to disregard the quarrel, which may be going on over their very heads. When the contenders have retired from the village green, they are perfectly calm. The argument is suspended until it can be carried on publicly. There seem to be no secret alliances among the men.

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"Another thing I must mention is the complete lack of emotional content in religious ceremonies. These are mildly pleasant chores. Although their structure is designed for a public pageant, nobody pays attention."